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DAN SMOOT

WHY THE PILOT SHORTAGE?

By W. L. Keeling

W. L. Keeling enlisted as a private in the Air Force at the outbreak of the Korean War, when he was 19. Without a college degree, he rose through the ranks, earned a regular commission as Captain, and became an instructor and technical writer in the Strategic Air Command Nuclear Weapons School. In 1966, at age 35, after 15 years of service, he resigned. He was one of 1422 professional military pilots who resigned from the U.S. Armed Forces in 1966.

Why, at a time when there is a critical shortage of trained pilots in Vietnam, are these young men quitting the careers they chose? Not for personal gain! It was a personal sacrifice for Keeling to resign. He had a fine record, a good income, a bright future — and, in 5 more years, could have retired on a substantial pension. The pilots are not resigning to avoid the dangers of combat service. They are quitting in protest against policies of our government, especially the Vietnam policy which sends our soldiers into a war they are not permitted to win, imposing restrictions that make our air operations far more costly to us, in lives and property lost, than to the enemy.

This article is an abbreviation of an open letter which Captain Keeling wrote to all Members of Congress, discussing the policies which drove him out of the service, ending with a plea that Congress alter our collision course with disaster.

The first thing to disillusion me was the conduct and outcome of the Korean war. Being sent into battle without benefit of a *declaration of war*, for a goal which did not include victory, and in which the actions of our military forces were restricted so that they were not allowed to bring the battles to a decisive conclusion in minimum time, and with minimum loss of life and property on both sides, is immoral and completely alien to the traditional concepts of our American way of life.

The end of the Korean war brought a return to the communists of all that they possessed prior to their aggression. They received no punishment for the aggression which they had committed.

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By 1956, when we nonchalantly turned our backs on Hungarian Freedom Fighters while they were slaughtered by Russian armor, I began seriously to question our nation's motives — going back to 1933, when our government officially recognized, as the legitimate government of Russia, one of the most ruthless and inhuman groups ever to come to power in a major nation.

During World War II, we reached agreements with the Russians which turned over to atheistic communism the people of Eastern Europe.

We abandoned Col. Mikhailovitch in Yugoslavia. This patriot was one of the best friends of our downed fliers during World War II, a foe of both naziism and communism. In his hour of need, we sat back and watched a known communist, Tito (whom we and the British had helped to power) assassinate him.

We sold Chiang Kai-shek armor and planes, then denied him gas and bullets.

In 1953, both Poland and East Germany tried to overthrow their communist rulers; and each time, we gave no assistance, though by our propaganda, we had led them to believe they could fully expect our help.

In 1956, when we turned our backs on the Hungarian Freedom Fighters, our nation surely reached its darkest hour. Had this revolt been successful, every other Russian satellite would have revolted. Why did we fail to help?

The answer came four years later, when it was revealed in Congress that our State Department had sent the following telegram to Marshall Tito on the third day of the revolt:

"The Government of the United States does not look with favor upon governments unfriendly to the Soviet Union on the borders of the Soviet Union."

In Cuba, Fidel Castro was helped to power by our State Department. Castro's communist affiliations should have been well known by many responsible officials, especially Mr. William Wieland. It is all the more incredible to find out that Wieland, who was either tragically wrong or worse, has since been twice promoted.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, we were given assurances that (1) inspections would be made to insure that the missiles had been removed and (2) no secret agreements would be made. The inspections were never made. If no secret agreements were made, we certainly must wonder why we so quickly pulled our missiles out of Turkey and Italy, and why our Navy and Coast Guard spend so much time and effort to keep anti-Castro Cuban raiding parties from reaching Cuba. It must give our Coast Guardsmen and Navy men a great sense of pride to know they are protecting a communist sanctuary 90 miles from the shores of our country!

Evidence is overwhelming that, prior to World War II, there was massive communist infiltration into our government, and that during the War treason was rampant; but the malefactors have never been exposed. Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley both testified that two more spy rings were operating in our government, but that they did not know in which departments. They have never been uncovered. Apparently, all efforts to uncover them have been successfully thwarted.

Before 1960, there seemed to be forces in the background, but in a position of responsibility, which were generally able to stay any effective action on our part to prevent communist advances. It appears that we generally ended up aiding communist advancement.

Since 1960, a new or perhaps more clearly detectable shift has been apparent in our policies. Up until that time, our nation was relatively safe from attack because of our strategic superiority. What has happened since 1960 can only be explained if we make the assumption that the policy planners brought in with the Kennedy Administration also brought in the philosophy that, should the arms race continue, an eventual conflict was certain to take place and therefore our capitulation was preferable.

Under the leadership of men whom Mr. Kennedy brought into high government positions, our strategic forces are being severely crippled, with-

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out the knowledge of the American people, through the use of lies and distortions concerning our military posture.

When Mr. Kennedy took office we had in excess of 1,400 B-47's, approximately 650 B-52's, and 100 B-58's. The B-47's have been scrapped, after having been purchased by the taxpayers at a cost of over $3.5 billion, not to mention the support equipment, crew training, and all other facilities necessary to an operational weapons system. The B-52's and B-58's are now programmed to be "phased out."

The lack of advanced manned space vehicles for replacement of these weapons leaves our security resting wholly on the untried missile systems. This is extremely dangerous on three counts:

First, many competent weapons personnel believe there may be an effective, practical, anti-missile defense which does not depend on intercepting and physically destroying an incoming warhead. However, because of the test-ban treaty, we may never know, at least not in time.

Secondly, as our missiles are intended to be retaliatory weapons, the missile and silo must be capable of surviving a nuclear detonation of close proximity. This they have supposedly been designed to do; but not one has ever been tested. Not one silo has ever been subjected to the effects of a nearby nuclear detonation, then an attempt made to fire its missile. Not one warhead has ever been subjected to the effects of a high-yield nuclear detonation, on its trajectory, then detonated as programmed. To my knowledge, no auto manufacturer has put an auto on the market in years without first subjecting it to tests designed to fail every major component. However, we still find undiscovered faults when they arrive on the market. Yet, Mr. McNamara, of Edsel fame, does not seem to believe that the weapons upon which the security of our country depends should be as carefully tested as the family car.

Thirdly, the missile, when depended upon exclusively, as it most surely must be in the near future, is the most rigid system imaginable. Once fired, there is no control over it. There is no recall, no capability to deviate from its programmed course; and of course, once launched, it is gone; it cannot be reused.

Mr. McNamara, perhaps more than any other of Mr. Kennedy's and Mr. Johnson's advisors, has been responsible for the dismantling of our strategic forces. Under his leadership, our most experienced generals have been speedily retired, especially those who had the courage to speak their minds when called before our congressmen. Our advanced weapons have been canceled. The Skybolt was dropped on the flimsy excuse that the cost was prohibitive. The Skybolt was canceled and further test-firings were prohibited after it had reportedly been successfully test-fired and other missiles were being readied for test-firing in the series.

Also, the Skybolt had been committed to the British for their "V" Bomber fleet, where it would have contributed significantly to the deterrent forces of the free world.

Dyna-Soar, which was being widely touted by the highest civilian and military officials as the first vital step to a practical manned space weapons system, has been canceled, as have several other advanced weapons systems.

We are told that we are committed not to use space for military purposes. The policy thus promulgated is that *the United States is not going to provide the military capabilities to protect its citizens from a Soviet attack from space, although every indication is that the Soviet Union is speedily working toward development of just such an attack capability.* In so many words, since 1960, Mr. McNamara and his co-workers in the defense department have been disarming our most vital forces in the very face of an ever-growing Soviet military threat.

Mr. McNamara now wants to replace the B-52 with a bomber version of the TFX. Can tactical forces which cannot reach the Soviet Union deter an attack on our country? Surely it is a new type of military philosophy which would replace a weapon which can reach any target with one which cannot reach 70% of the targets in poten-

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tial enemy territory. According to reliable sources, this would be one of the limitations inherent in a bomber version of the TFX.

We now find ourselves in another undeclared no-win war, where we are not allowed to fight for a quick, decisive victory. Rather, we must struggle along on enemy terms, which can only end in costing numerous lives.

No military man past the grade of corporal would intentionally let an enemy build defenses that his forces would later have to destroy at a tremendously increased cost in lives and equipment. The anti-aircraft missile sites in North Vietnam are an example of this, in that they were allowed to become operational before we were allowed to attack them. Many strategic targets in Vietnam are out of bounds; we may not attack them, although our military leaders agree it would shorten the war and save innumerable lives. I also must question the wisdom of pauses in bombing of North Vietnam. Isn't the way to bring an enemy to the conference table to defeat him, not give him the opportunity to regroup in order that he may more effectively attack you?

I can work up little enthusiasm for playing clay pigeon to an enemy missile crew whose site could have been destroyed before it became operational, except for the decision of a politician unschooled in the art of warfare.

I fully agree that each citizen owes it to his country to serve to the best of his ability when called upon. However, our country likewise has a moral obligation to our soldiers to be loyal to them just as fully as we expect loyalty from them. We are not showing them this loyalty when we commit them to die on battlefields where countless numbers will be slaughtered because they are not allowed to fight to win, where they are allowed to languish in enemy prison camps for years because the wars are not brought to decisive and successful conclusions. There are, according to State Department figures, 389 prisoners still missing from the Korean war; and there is considerable evidence that many were and possibly may still be in Soviet slave labor camps.

We have shocking examples of official disloyalty to our soldiers in other matters. I could not believe, had I not heard and seen our President calling for more trade and commerce with the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, that such a thing could happen: our own leaders calling for us to help build up the very countries which are furnishing the incentive and supplies being used to kill our own men.

The United States of America is now sending its young men to die on a foreign battleground while greedy, self-seeking political and industrial leaders urge us to make a quick buck by trading with the enemy. Does the theory that we are building bridges of friendship by trading with the mortal enemy while they are killing our men on the battlefield and preparing to attack our homeland make any kind of sense?

One more example of an un-American action of our own government: we are in the process of joining hands further with atheistic communism by subverting the government of a friendly nation, Rhodesia, which has never committed aggression in any form on any one.

Certainly if called, I will return to the service; but I will not voluntarily make a career out of blindly following the kind of leadership which tolerates and even encourages the policies which I have enumerated.

You, gentlemen of the Congress, could change these policies. You could stop the disarmament of our country. You could change the course which is leading to the mass murder of people in Southern Africa, as has already happened in the Congo.

May God be with you.

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